

**SYNOD OF THE GREAT LAKES  
2010 MINISTERIAL SALARY GUIDELINES AND SCHEDULE**

**GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING THE SALARY AND PROVISIONS FOR MINISTERS OF  
WORD AND SACRAMENT**

The Synod of the Great Lakes each year recommends guidelines for its eight classes. Each class then considers this guideline as it establishes a minimum standard for salaries, in order that pastors in the RCA are adequately compensated.

The Call: The call issued to a pastor is a covenant which addresses the relationship between a pastor and a congregation. The pastor is expected to perform certain services in his/her ministry among the congregation, and the congregation is expected to provide remuneration to the pastor in a manner that may keep him/her from pre-occupation with financial concerns. This covenant normally limits the pastor's employment to the church and is an obligation clearly undertaken by the church.

Goals: Every consistory needs to be involved with their pastor(s) in setting specific goals for both the pastor(s) and the church in order to lead the church in mission for Jesus Christ. Financial considerations are part of this two-way accountability and communication.

Performance Review: The performance review requirement of the *Book of Church Order* (BCO) (Chapter 1, part II, Article 7, Sec 1h) should be conscientiously pursued on an annual basis.

Personnel Committee: It is recommended that each church appoint a personnel committee to work with all church staff members. Realizing that there are differences from church to church, the details of the personnel committee are left to the individual church. The following guidelines identify the basic tasks/duties of a personnel committee. A personnel committee:

- a. Meets with each pastor and staff person at least twice per year, preferably including the pastor's spouse once per year.
- b. Sets goals for each position and discusses with each pastor and staff person how the goals fit into the vision of the church.
- c. Reviews the past performance of the pastor(s) and staff persons.
- d. Acknowledges superior achievements and extraordinary service with public recognition and affirmation.
- e. Discusses general employment concerns with pastor(s) and staff persons.
- f. Discusses specific financial needs which include salary, housing, insurance, continuing education, retirement and transportation reimbursement, as applicable.
- g. Considers financial needs beyond the day-to-day living expenses such as medical expenses, education costs, and emergencies.
- h. Discusses other needs such as family crises, illness, marital stress, emotional health, and job satisfaction.
- i. Gives support and encouragement.
- j. Discusses and facilitates good relationships between church staff members.
- k. Serves as the communication link between staff and the consistory.

Salaries: Salaries must be practical and fair. A salary should assure sufficient support so that financial problems do not interfere with a pastor's best work. This salary scale below is a minimum standard only. In addition to fulfilling this standard, workload, recognition of job performance and attention to special needs should be considered within the process of salary determination.

**SALARY SCHEDULE BASED ON YEARS OF SERVICE AND THE CONGREGATION'S CONFESSING MEMBERSHIP COUNT**

1. Salary Schedule: The salary schedule shall apply to all full time Ministers of Word and Sacrament whether on a call basis or a contract. Churches with staff ministries may use the first column (0-200 members) as a minimum for paying the salary of Associate Pastors.
2. Waiving the Minimum Salary: If a church and pastor agree to a less-than-minimum salary, a waiver request, signed by both the pastor and a consistory representative, shall be sent to the appropriate Classis committee for Classis approval. The waiver request must state the amount and the reasons for the exemption. A waiver request shall be submitted to the Classis at least three months prior to the effective date. The compensation forfeited by the waiver is not required to be repaid, unless a repayment agreement is stipulated in the waiver request.
3. Part-time Contracts: Part-time calls/contracts are not bound by the salary schedule, because such contracts can vary significantly. However, the principles of fairness, compensation for workload, and rewarding job performance need to be considered when determining compensation. The use of the salary schedule on a pro-rated basis is helpful and advised. Any provisions or payment of provisions in lieu of base salary may be negotiated between the pastor and the church. All contracts with ordained ministers require the approval of the Classis.
4. Church Staff Guidelines: A compensation reference guide for non-ordained (those not-ordained as Ministers of Word and Sacrament) staff members titled, "Church Staff Salary & Benefits Guidelines" is available from the Synod of the Great Lakes.

**2010 MINIMUM ANNUAL BASE SALARY SCHEDULE  
Number of Confessing Members**

Base Salary					Base Salary plus Housing Allowance (30%)				
*Years	0-200	201-350	351-500	501+	*Years	0-200	201-350	351-500	501+
<b>0</b>	\$35,23 4	\$37,24 9	\$39,26 1	\$41,27 5	<b>0</b>	\$45,80 4	\$48,42 4	\$51,03 9	\$53,65 8
<b>1</b>	\$36,03 9	\$38,05 3	\$40,06 6	\$42,08 1	<b>1</b>	\$46,85 0	\$49,46 9	\$52,08 6	\$54,70 6
<b>2</b>	\$36,84 5	\$38,85 9	\$40,87 2	\$42,88 5	<b>2</b>	\$47,89 8	\$50,51 7	\$53,13 4	\$55,75 1
<b>3</b>	\$37,65 0	\$39,66 5	\$41,67 7	\$43,69 1	<b>3</b>	\$48,94 5	\$51,56 5	\$54,18 0	\$56,79 9
<b>4</b>	\$38,45 6	\$40,46 9	\$42,48 3	\$44,49 7	<b>4</b>	\$49,99 3	\$52,61 0	\$55,22 8	\$57,84 7
<b>5</b>	\$39,26 1	\$41,27 5	\$43,28 8	\$45,30 2	<b>5</b>	\$51,03 9	\$53,65 8	\$56,27 5	\$58,89 3
<b>6</b>	\$40,06 6	\$42,08 1	\$44,09 3	\$46,10 7	<b>6</b>	\$52,08 6	\$54,70 6	\$57,32 1	\$59,94 0
<b>7</b>	\$40,87 2	\$42,88 5	\$44,89 9	\$46,91 3	<b>7</b>	\$53,13 4	\$55,75 1	\$58,36 9	\$60,98 8
<b>8</b>	\$41,67 7	\$43,69 1	\$45,70 4	\$47,72 0	<b>8</b>	\$54,18 0	\$56,79 9	\$59,41 6	\$62,03 5
<b>9</b>	\$42,48 3	\$44,49 7	\$46,51 0	\$48,52 4	<b>9</b>	\$55,22 8	\$57,84 7	\$60,46 4	\$63,08 1
<b>10 +</b>	\$43,28 8	\$45,30 2	\$47,31 5	\$49,33 0	<b>10 +</b>	\$56,27 5	\$58,89 3	\$61,51 0	\$64,12 8

\*NOTE: Years of Service since Ordination  
(Base salary reflects no change from 2009 in any category)

**EMPLOYMENT PROVISIONS:** These items are included as part of the minimum salary requirement that apply to full-time Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

1. Retirement Fund: Full contributions must be made to the RCA Retirement Plan as required by the BCO Call Form.
2. Required Insurance Coverage: RCA Major Medical (including family), Group Life, and Long-Term Disability are to be provided by the church as required in the BCO Call Form. The church may choose to provide major medical coverage using another provider if the appropriate covenant of care contribution to BOBS is made. Family coverage may be excluded only if family coverage is provided through a spousal insurance program. Dental and Long Term Care (including family) are optional and may be added to the required insurance provisions.
3. Housing: The church shall provide the pastor with free use of a parsonage including all utilities, or a housing allowance which equals at least 30% of the base salary. The amount designated for the housing allowance and reported to the IRS may be adjusted to take advantage of IRS guidelines. The agreement must be recorded in the consistory minutes at the beginning of each year.
4. Social Security: Pastors shall be reimbursed for Social Security payments at the rate of one-half of the rate payable by a self-employed person. This reimbursement is calculated on the base salary plus housing. If a pastor has elected not to be part of the Social Security system, an equal allowance is to be made for another appropriate retirement program. The church shall require evidence that this other retirement program has benefits comparable to Social Security benefits including Medicare.
5. Professional Development: (as required in the call form of the BCO): A minimum of one week with a stipend equal to not less than 1/52 of the annual minimum base salary (excluding housing allowance) shall be granted each year for professional development. By mutual agreement, this time and money may be accumulated up to a maximum equivalent of four years of service. The program of study must be approved by the Consistory, and should be mutually beneficial to the church and the pastor.
6. Vacation: The minimum amount of vacation time granted each year shall be:
  - a. Senior and solo pastors: 4 weeks (including 4 Sundays).
  - b. Associate Pastors with 0-5 years of service: 3 weeks.
  - c. Associate Pastors with over 5 years of service: 4 weeks (including 4 Sundays).  
(One week of vacation may be carried over to the next year.)
7. Car Allowance: Use of car for ministry purposes shall be reimbursed either at the IRS per mile rate or for actual expenses, whichever is more equitable in the situation, as agreed upon by pastor and consistory. (Note: Per IRS rules, one round trip commute each day is not a reimbursable expense.)

#### **RECOMMENDED PROVISIONS**

1. Sabbatical: It is recommended that consistories adopt a policy of granting pastors at least a six-week sabbatical at full salary after each seven years of service with that congregation. The sabbatical shall be scheduled at a time mutually agreed upon by the consistory and the pastor. The plan for the sabbatical shall be approved by the consistory with the clear intention that the sabbatical benefit both the pastor and the church.
2. Ministerial Couples: It is recommended that the consistory of a church served by a ministerial couple be sensitive to the possibility that a shared parsonage benefit or housing allowance can decrease those pastors' retirement and social security payments thus placing them at a disadvantage when they retire. Those consistories are urged to consider paying more than the minimum retirement and/or social security benefit to correct this inequity.
3. Special consideration is recommended for those pastors who have led their congregations to start significant new worship services, worship sites or ministries resulting in new conversions to Christ and new ministry leaders. It is recommended that the consistory consider an annual merit increase of an additional 2.5% above the appropriate step in the chart (or above the current salary if already above the minimum annual base salary). If these new revitalization efforts result in the formation of a new church, it is recommended that the salary be at least 5% above the appropriate step in the chart (or above the current salary if already above the minimum annual base salary). These recommendations are voluntary and are at the discretion of the consistory.

Approved by Synod of the Great Lakes Assembly May 4, 2009